

Message Text

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FOR CU/EA COOPER

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SUBJ: SATELLITE PROGRAM AT UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH PACIFIC (USP)

1. RICHARD MOORE, NASA MISSION OPERATIONS DIRECTOR FOR ATS-1,3, 5, 6 HAS INFORMED USP THROUGH GILDA BENSTEAD OF POSSIBLE AVAILABILITY OF ATS-6 SATELLITE FOR USP EXTENSION SERVICE PROGRAM. ACCORDING TO MOORE, SATELLITE IS LIKELY TO BE PLACED IN POSITION OVER GUAM AND WOULD BE IN POSITION TO COVER ALL EXISTING GROUND TERMINALS OF USP SYSTEM. MOORE HAS SOLICITED FROM BENSTEAD, ON VERY INFORMAL BASIS, PROPOSALS FOR USP USE OF ATS-6.

2. IF THIS COMES ABOUT, IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT USP SYSTEM WOULD HAVE TO BE UPGRADED CONSIDERABLY TO TAKE
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ADVANTAGE OF ATS-6 EQUIPMENT. IT WOULD MEAN CHANGEOVER FROM AUDIO ONLY OF ATS-1 TO VIDEO/ONE WAY/TWO WAY OF ATS-6. EXISTING USP EQUIPMENT COULD STILL BE USED IF ATS-1 SYSTEM CONTINUES IN EXISTENCE, BUT ATS-6 WILL REQUIRE MUCH MORE SOPHISTICATED AND EXPENSIVE GROUND TERMINALS. WORD HAS FILTERED TO USP THAT THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY FIFTY

AVAILABLE GROUND TERMINALS IN STORAGE AT DEPT OF HEW, SOME BELONGING TO ALSAKA GOVERNMENT, OTHERS TO HEW, AND THAT THIS SUPPLY MIGHT BE TAPPED FOR USP USE.

3. AVAILABILITY OF ATS-6 WOULD SOLVE SOME EXISTING PROBLEMS BUT WILL CREATE OTHERS. MOST IMPORTANTLY, IT WOULD GUARANTEE CONTINUATION OF HIGHLY IMPORTANT SATELLITE NETWORK LINKING MAIN CAMPUS WITH USP EXTENSION CENTERS BEYOND THE EXPECTED DEMISE OF ATS-1. IT WOULD ALSO PROVIDE USP WITH THE ADDED POTENTIAL OF VIDEO FOR LECTURE COURSES AND TUTORIALS, AND WILL EFFECTIVELY MULTIPLY THE MANY USES OF THE SYSTEM.

4. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF DRAWBACKS, HOWEVER, SOME EASILY OVERCOME, OTHERS MORE DIFFICULT TO ANSWER. OPERATIONAL CONTROL OVER ATS-6 IN THE FIELD IS CRUCIAL POINT, AND USP UNDERSTANDABLY HOPES THAT CONTROL WILL BE LOCATED IN SUVA. USP IS UNAWARE OF ANY APPROACHES MADE TO OTHER USERS OF ATS-1, INCLUDING PEACESAT SYSTEM, AND NEEDS OF THESE OTHER USERS WILL HAVE TO BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION. THE EQUIPMENT REQUIRED TO LINK INTO ATS-6 WILL BE MORE SOPHISTICATED, MORE EXPENSIVE, AND CONSEQUENTLY MORE DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN IN THE FIELD. THE VIDEO OUTPUT WILL REQUIRE TELEVISION MONITORS AT EACH TERMINAL - A FEW TECHNICAL DETAILS, SUCH AS COMPATIBILITY WITH JAPANESE AND EUROPEAN VIDEO EQUIPMENT VERSUS US MODELS MUST BE IRONED OUT.

5. THERE IS NO DOUBT, HOWEVER, DESPITE THE DRAWBACKS, THAT USP IS ANXIOUS TO PURSUE THE ATS-6 OFFER. BOTH VICE CHANCELLOR MARAJ AND EXTENSION SERVICE DIRECTOR MCMECHAN HAVE INDICATED TO US THEIR INTEREST IN MOVING AHEAD WITH ATS-6
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PLANS. MARAJ SAID THAT MAKING ATS-6 AVAILABLE TO USP COULD BE THE BEST GIFT FROM THE USG IN 1977 TO MARK USP'S TENTH ANNIVERSARY.

6. EMBASSY FULLY SUPPORTS USP PLANS TO PROCEED WITH ATS-6 OFFER, RECOGNIZING THAT EVERYTHING STILL IS AT PRELIMINARY STAGE OF PLANNING. USP IS KEEPING US INFORMED OF THEIR DISCUSSIONS WITH MOORE AND OTHER NASA OFFICIALS ON THE SUBJECT. WOULD APPRECIATE CU/EA VERIFY SUBSTANCE OF THIS CABLE WITH MOORE AND DETERMINE IF WE CAN ASSIST IN ANY WAY. FLANEGIN UNQTE KISSINGER

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